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THE DANGER OF MODERN FURNISHINGS.

BY T. MITCHELL PRUDDEN, M.D.



NE of the most threatening tendencies of modern times in matters of health is that of overcrowding in cities, and the great element of danger from this overcrowding is not only the insufficiency of air in living-rooms and the lack of ready means for its renewal, but the accumulation in this air of infectious germs floating with the dust. Abundant water supply and good sewerage have rendered possible and measurably safe, so far as the ordinary waste of life is concerned, the building of vast tenements which swarm with people. But the means of getting pure air, and especially of disposing of infectious material often floating in it when it is confined, have not at all kept pace with the demands of health and cleanliness.

But when we turn to the larger and more liberally furnished dwellings of the well-to-do classes, we do not find everything reassuring from the stand-point of hygiene, for in some respects the rich are sadly handicapped by the "tyranny of things." Of course long and thick piled carpets afford persistent lurking places for infectious as well as other dust. Certainly heavy hangings in a measure hinder the detergent action of the sunlight, shut the used air in and fresh air out, and shelter floating matter which might otherwise escape. Without doubt complex upholstery with roughened fabrics increases the difficulties in the maintenance of cleanliness. But the usage of the householder in these matters will, after all, depend upon whether his practical devotion be most at Fashion's or Hygeia's shrine, and it may not without temerity be very urgently criticized. And yet we well may long for the coming of a time when clean, clear, airy, simply furnished living-rooms shall replace the stuffy fabric-strewn apartments in which the fashionable citizen so much delights to-day.

In one particular, however, the devotee to cleanliness may be unreservedly insistent, and that is that in the cleaning of living-rooms, whether occupied by the sick or the well, the distinct and recognized purpose of the operation shall be to remove, and not simply to stir up the ever-gathering dust. The past few years, so beneficently signalized by the exploitation of the new germ lore, have seen marked departures from the traditional sweepings and dustings of a past era; and the emancipation of the housekeeper, and incidentally of the household, from the thrall of the pestiferous feather duster seems fairly under way. Still, some of the old barbarous travesties upon cleaning widely persist. The dry broom still seeks out in the deep recesses of the carpets not the coarser particles of dirt alone, but the hordes of living germs which were for the time safely ensconced; and among these what malignant forms the chances of the day may have mingled! These all are set awirl in the air; some gather on salient points of the fittings and furnishings; many stay with the operator, to vex for hours the delicate breathing passages or the deeper recesses of the lungs. Then in the lull which follows gravity reasserts its sway, and the myriad particles, both the living and the dead, slowly settle to the horizontal surfaces, especially to the carpets. Then the feather duster comes upon the scene, and another cyclone befalls. The result of it all is that the dust has finally been forced to more or less completely abandon the smooth and shining surfaces where it would be visible, and is largely caught in the surface roughnesses of the carpets or upholstery or hangings, ready at the lightest footfall or the chariest touch to dance into the air again, and be taken into the lungs of the victims of the prevailing delusion—the delusion that the way to care for always noxious and offensive and often dangerous dust is not to get it out of the house, but to keep it stirring in the air until at last it has settled where it does not vex the eye.—*Harper's Monthly.*

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AMONG BACHELOR APARTMENTS.

BY HELEN M. WINSLOW.



NE hundred and ninety-three thousand for the furnishing of a flat of five rooms!

That is the amount a New York bachelor put into his apartments, and even then he had only the foundation, so to speak, of a home, without the essence, the spirit, of it.

This statement, with all the details, was printed in one of the New York dailies, and read by a Boston newspaper woman, an old maid, beg pardon! a woman bachelor—who was thereby inspired to see what is being done with bachelor apartments in the Hub of the Universe. And she in company with a visiting Chicago newspaper woman and a country cousin of advanced views and certain age—a trio of women bachelors—set forth on a voyage of discovery. Of course the classic grounds of old Cambridge, and the "West End" of Boston were the first to be thought of. There are any quantity of bachelor apartments at Harvard—from the cozy, comfortable two-room affairs in the college halls to the more pretentious suites of millionaires' sons, whose first object in life is to spend "the governor's money."

A cousin of the Chicago woman was included among the latter, and through his influence the trio gained a peep into several of the most interesting of the students' quarters. Among them was a Japanese apartment, gay with umbrellas and fans and screens, carpeted and decorated with fine matting, and so thickly bestrewn with flying long-legged birds and hanging lamps and tinkling bamboo portières and smoking censers and all the rest of the regulation Japanese paraphernalia, that the country cousin remarked that she "didn't see how any young man of to-day, who intended to live the life of a progressive American, could breathe—much more, study—in such a place." And there were plenty of others richly furnished with plush and brocatelle hangings and satin brocade furniture, hot and stuffy, all surmounted by costly oil paintings that did not harmonize either with the room they adorned, or the ample water-colors that were sprinkled injudiciously among them.

"Goodness gracious!" said the Western woman, with characteristic breeziness, "I wish I had the money those things have cost. I know I could have evolved a more artistic spot than I have yet seen."

But not until the knob of Beacon Hill was reached did they find a place that exactly suited, and which they all decided was far ahead of their own powers of originality, comfort and artistic design.

"If you want to see the most unique bachelor's apartment in this country," said their young Harvard friend, "let me give you a note to a man of the world, who lives up in Hotel Tudor, close to the State House, you know. You'll stop croaking and grumbling when you get there."

And they did.

Between the historic ground where stood the famous John Hancock house on one side, and the beautiful ivy-draped Somerset Club house on the other, stands the Tudor, towering several stories above its neighbors, and overlooking, with a far sweep of vision, not only the Common, but all the South End and Back Bay districts, and the blue hills and river and sea beyond.

